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Broadcasters Letter

United States Department of Agriculture • Office of Communications • Washington, DC 20250-1300

Letter No. 2677

September 2, 1994

RAPID MICROBIAL TEST FOR MEAT AND POULTRY -- Agriculture Secretary Mike Espy announced August 25 the development of a rapid microbial test that can detect generic bacteria on poultry, pork and beef. The test adapts bioluminescence technology, takes five minutes and can be used in commercial plants. Agriculture Secretary Mike Espy said, "I have instructed the Food Safety and Inspection Service and the Agricultural Research Service to immediately begin work together to develop a plan on how to best incorporate this new test into the inspection system." The method and approach used to validate the test were reviewed by scientists in government, academia and industry. It has been tested in four beef plants on more than 1,000 beef carcasses, in five poultry plants on more than 500 poultry carcasses and in three pork plants on more than 300 carcasses. Studies show that the rapid test is as accurate and repeatable as the standard 48-hour plate culture for determining high levels of generic bacteria. **Contact: Mary Dixon (202) 720-4623.**

U.S. AGRICULTURAL EXPORTS PROJECTED AT NEAR-RECORD \$43 BILLION -- Agriculture Secretary Mike Espy announced August 26 that U.S. agricultural exports are expected to reach a near-record \$43 billion in fiscal year 1995, the highest level in 14 years. Secretary Espy said, "The projected gains in value and volume for 1995 are good news for American farmers, food processors, and the U.S. economy. Export growth means higher incomes for farmers and rural communities." The department's first agricultural trade projections for fiscal year 1995, which begins October 1, were released jointly by the Foreign Agricultural Service, the Economic Research Service and the World Agricultural Outlook Board. Exports are expected to be bolstered by expanding foreign demand for U.S. meats, fruits, vegetables, and other high-value consumer foods. **Contact: Eric Von Chantfort (202) 720-9443.**

IMPORTATION OF PREVIOUSLY PROHIBITED FRUITS AND VEGETABLES -- USDA is now allowing the importation of a number of previously prohibited fruits and vegetables. B. Glen Lee, deputy administrator for the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service's plant protection and quarantine program, said as a condition of entry, all of these fruits and vegetables are subject to inspection, disinfection, or both at the port of first arrival as required by regulations of APHIS. In addition, some of the fruits and vegetables are required to undergo prescribed treatments for fruit flies or other pests that pose a danger to American agriculture. This action provides the U.S. with additional kinds of fruits and vegetables while continuing to protect American agriculture against introduction of exotic plant pests. **Contact: Ed Curlett (301) 436-3256.**

KEENEY NAMED HEAD OF FRUIT AND VEGETABLE DIVISION -- Robert Keeney has been named national director of the Agricultural Marketing Service's Fruit and Vegetable Division. As division director, Keeney heads the USDA group responsible for activities as diverse as certifying the quality of America's fruit and vegetables, annually purchasing over \$300 million in commodities for domestic food assistance programs such as the School Lunch Program, and ensuring fair trading practices in the marketing of fresh and frozen produce through enforcement of the Perishable Agricultural Commodities Act. **Contact: Gil High (202) 720-8998.**

RESPECT FOR THESE TWO BEES -- Bumblebees and carpenter bees get a bad rap. A USDA bee expert Stephen L. Buchmann says these bees are due respect for pollinating food crops. These two bees rate attention for pollinating crops that domestic honey bees normally ignore, such as tomatoes, or barely touch, such as cranberries. He says they may do the job quicker than honey bees. Buchmann's studies are aimed at finding the best bees for pollinating crops to insure fruit and vegetable production. **Contact: Dennis Senft (510) 559-6068.**

ATIENZA NAMED HEAD OF COTTON DIVISION -- Mary Atienza has been named national director of the Agricultural Marketing Service's Cotton Division. As division director, Atienza heads USDA's group that establishes cotton quality standards, and classes, grades and tests foreign and domestic cotton. The division also provides market news information on domestic cotton, enforces marketing regulations and has oversight responsibilities for the Cotton Research and Promotion Program. **Contact: Gil High (202) 720-8998.**

APPOINTEES NAMED TO SERVE ON COTTON BOARD -- Secretary of Agriculture Mike Espy has appointed two members and one alternate member to the Cotton Board. The board administers a national cotton research and promotion program. The appointees are: James M. Davine Jr., Burnsville, MN; Julia K. Hughes, Silver Spring, MD; and alternate Laura E. Jones, New York, NY. The appointees will serve the remaining portion of a 3-year term ending December 31, 1995. **Contact: Alicia Ford (202) 720-8998.**

CHANGING CLASS II MILK PRICING METHOD RECOMMENDED -- USDA is recommending changes in how the Class II milk price is determined monthly in all federal milk marketing orders. Lon Hatamiya, administrator for USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service Lon Hatamiya said the new Class II milk pricing method will use the Minnesota-Wisconsin price for the second preceding month and add a fixed differential of 30 cents. This price will be announced at the same time as the Class I milk price. Changing the pricing method for Class II milk will coordinate the value of products used in the manufacture of Class II dairy products with higher Class I fluid milk prices. Hatamiya said that using the recommended pricing method would simplify the pricing procedure and assure that Class I and Class II prices fluctuate in the same direction. **Contact: Connie Crunkleton (202) 720-8998.**

MCKEE NAMED HEAD OF DAIRY DIVISION -- Richard M. McKee has been named national director of the Agricultural Marketing Service's Dairy Division. As division director, McKee heads USDA's group that oversees administration of the national dairy promotion program and 38 federal milk orders throughout the U.S., covering 70 percent of U.S. milk production. The division also provides market news and information on dairy production, and develops and implements official grade standards for the industry. **Contact: Gil High (202) 720-8998.**

NATIONAL ORGANIC STANDARDS BOARD NOMINATIONS -- USDA is seeking nominations for possible appointment to the National Organic Standards Board. USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service administers the National Organic Standards Program. Terms of four current board members will expire January 24, 1995. Agriculture Secretary Mike Espy will appoint members to fill these vacancies from nominations submitted. USDA is seeking nominees to represent farmers, handlers or processors, retailers and environmentalists. USDA will select members based on: demonstrated experience and interest in organics; commodity and geographic representation; endorsed support of industry organizations; demonstrated experience with environmental concerns; and other factors appropriate for specific positions. **Contact: Connie Crunkleton (202) 720-8998.**

FROM OUR RADIO SERVICE

AGRICULTURE USA # 1944 -- On this edition, Gary Crawford talks to USDA'S top economist Keith Collins about the upcoming 1995 Farm Bill debate. (Weekly cassette -- 13-1/2 minute documentary.)

CONSUMER TIME # 1425 -- Integrated Pest Management for home gardeners; tomato horned worm; health insurance counseling for seniors; invisible trail; rapid test to detect bacteria on carcasses. (Weekly cassette -- 2-1/2 to 3 minute consumer features.)

AGRITAPE FEATURES #1935 -- The budget and the Farm Bill; bigger export year coming; dust and a farm disease; poultry outlook; 90-day weather forecast. (Weekly cassette -- news features.)

UPCOMING ON USDA RADIO NEWSLINE. These are USDA reports we know about in advance. Our newslines carries many stories every day which are not listed in this lineup. Monday, September 12, (Newslines changes at 10:30 a.m. EDT for crop report stories and changes again at 5:00 p.m. for cotton reports and other daily releases.) U.S. crop report, world agricultural supply and demand; Tuesday, September 13, weekly weather and crop outlook, world agricultural production, world grain production, world oilseed production, world cotton production and world tobacco production; Wednesday, September 14, feed update, oil crops update; Thursday, September 15, milk production, tobacco outlook, Europe outlook; Friday, September 16, cattle on feed.

USDA RADIO NEWSLINES (202) 488-8358 or 8359.

COMREX ENCODED (202) 720-2545

Material changed at 5 p.m., EDT, each working day.

FROM OUR TELEVISION SERVICE

FEATURES -- Patrick O'Leary reports on early release times for USDA Crop Reports.

ACTUALITIES -- Secretary of Agriculture Mike Espy on the 1995 Farm Bill; Ellen Haas, Assistant Secretary for Food and Consumer Services, unveils USDA's new parent guide for healthful school meals.

UPCOMING FEATURES -- DeBoria Janifer reports on natural access for groundwater research.

SATELLITE COORDINATES FOR TV NEWSFEEDS:

*Galaxy 7, Transponder 9, Channel 9, Audio 6.2 or 6.8, Downlink frequency 3880 Mhz.
Available on Thursdays 3:45 - 4:00 p.m., EDT; Mondays 11:00 - 11:15 a.m., EDT.*

Comments and suggestions are welcome regarding USDA broadcast services.
Call Larry A. Quinn, (202) 720-6072; write 1618-S, USDA, Washington, D.C. 20250-1300.

OFF MIKE

WEATHER MODIFICATION...practices seem to be paying off in southwestern Kansas. **Hap Larson** (KBUF, Garden City, KS) says that 12 counties are investing in weather modification projects to help increase rainfall and to suppress hail damage to crops. Dollars invested are paying off in crop savings. Work began as local projects, but now the state water office is participating. Because of concern for ground water supply, farmers and researchers in the area are looking at good dryland farming practices to minimize water needed for crops. Hap mentioned one experiment near Holcomb, KS, that is placing underground irrigation systems right at the plant root level. Water is a critical subject which Hap covers daily in his broadcasts.

RURAL/URBAN BARBECUE...that's the way both walks of life get together in Kankakee County to share in the productivity of agriculture. **Marla Behrends** (WKAN, Kankakee, IL) says the 30th annual event is being held this year with local growers donating melons, potatoes and cole slaw ingredients. Proceeds of this community get-together go toward a local 4-H scholarship fund. Marla has just finished broadcast coverage of five county fairs. Her three teenagers have been exhibitors in hog shows at some of those fairs claiming Grand Champion honors in both junior and open competition at the Will County Fair.

RICE HARVEST...is underway in Arkansas and the milling quality is good, says **Stewart Doan** (ARN Agriculture, Little Rock, AR). Early soybeans are ripening. Cotton benefitted earlier from wet conditions, but current dry spell may cut crop expectations. Boll weevils have been the most serious insect pest this summer. Arkansas growers will be voting whether to participate in a Boll Weevil Eradication Program this year.

STILL DRY IN TEXAS...reports **Curt Lancaster** (VSA Radio Network, San Angelo, TX). Only 8 of the 18-22 inches of annual West Texas rainfall have been received and the cotton there is suffering. As current president of the National Association of Farm Broadcasters (NAFB), Curt has seen a lot of U.S. agriculture this year in his travels to broadcaster meetings nationwide. Curt will preside at the 50th Anniversary meeting of NAFB in Kansas City, November 9-13.

Larry A. Quinn

LARRY A. QUINN, Director

Video, Teleconference and Radio Center



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